GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1017
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2002
ILL EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS ON CLIMATE
A. VENKATESH NAIK

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a research project about climatic change has been undertaken in Kullu Valley by the Delhi University in collaboration with certain other agency/institute;

(b) if so, the details and findings thereof;

(c) whether according to research project, the number of casualties and types of extreme weather events taking place in Kullu Valley have increased due to unplanned developmental projects and this variation can lead to adverse effect on the entire South Asian Region;

(d) if so, whether due to unplanned change in land-use, about 67% of the 1500 major glaciers in the Himalayas are receding and mountains and urban areas are affected as a result thereof; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the concrete action plan chalked out or to be chalked out in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVRIONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (c) The Department of Geography, University of Delhi has been undertaking collaborative research activities with University of Manitoba, Canada with financial support from Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and Canadian International Developmental Agency on various facets of environmental impacts in the Kullu Valley with special attention to extreme events such as land-slides, flash-floods, climatic variability etc. The studies have enhanced our understanding of anthropogenic impacts on land-use and land-use changes as well as land information system in Kullu Valley, including the impact of climatic variability on crop yields in the Valley. The micro level studies done in the Kullu Valley cannot be co-related for the entire South-Asian region.

(d) According to the Geological Survey of India, as per the inventory of Himalayan Glaciers, the Indian part of Himalaya has more than 7500 glaciers of all dimensions. There are only 365 major glaciers, more than 5 km in length (excluding Shyok and Kishanganga basins). The studies conducted by the Survey reveal that the majority of them are receding. The rate of recession in different climate zones of Himalaya is found to be variable in different years. Therefore, the studies confined to Kullu Valley may not give the overall natural cyclic process. The earth has witnessed several phases of glacial and interglacial period. It is a natural phenomenon. Presently the earth is passing through an interglacial phase whereby the ice bodies throughout the world are receding and the recession of glacier is a natural phenomenon and could also be attributed to global warming.

(e) The Government is aware of the environmental concerns and has supported conservation activities in the Himalayan region including afforestation, establishment of community toilets, and removal of garbage and promotion of eco-tourism.